

WASHINGTON, D.C. – People with diabetes spend 2.4 times as much on health care costs each year as people who don't have diabetes, according to a study by the American Diabetes Association. Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy G. Thompson, ADA President Francine R. Kaufman, M.D. and the Congressional Diabetes Caucus announced the study's findings jointly on Thursday, February 27.

The study found that the annual cost of diabetes in medical expenditures and lost productivity has soared, climbing from \$98 billion in 1997 to \$132 billion in 2002. The direct medical costs of diabetes more than doubled in that time, from \$44 billion in 1997 to \$91.8 billion in 2002.

Representative Xavier Becerra (CA – 31), who was named Vice Chair of the Congressional Diabetes Caucus at the start of the 108th Congress this past January, was on-hand to discuss this alarming rise.

“We must explore new ways to fund innovative methods of preventative care so that more government dollars are spent finding a cure,” Rep. Becerra said. “We cannot fight to eliminate this disease when all the money expended by the government and diabetes patients is used for defensive purposes. We must do more.”

According to the study, the nation spends \$13,243 on each person with diabetes, compared to \$2,560 per person for people who don't have diabetes. After adjusting for differences in age, sex, and race/ethnicity between people with and without diabetes, the study found that people with diabetes incur medical expenses that are about 2.4 times higher. The figures take into account spending by individuals, employers, insurers, and government programs such as Medicaid and Medicare.